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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to provide preliminary information on the nature of remedial reading instruction. Specifically, the study examined the focus of remedial instruction and the relationships of this instruction to the classroom reading program. In addition, it gathered data on what instructional activities remedial students missed when they left their regular classrooms. Information was gathered through observation of remedial reading students both in their classroom reading instruction and in their remedial sessions. Students were from five different first through fourth grade classrooms in four different schools. Four of the five programs were organized around a "pull out" model wherein the students left the regular classroom for remedial instruction. The fifth was an in-class program in which instruction was delivered by a Chapter 1 aide. Results showed that while individual teachers used little instructional variety, they did use a wide range of materials. There was little evidence of the use of clear cut goals or of monitoring of student advancement toward goals, and teachers tended to use a single or small set of activities for all of their groups of students. Little congruence was found between instruction in regular classrooms and instruction in the remedial classes. Data also supported previous findings that Chapter 1 programs do not provide students with additional time for reading instruction. (FL)

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What is remedial reading? A descriptive study.

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Introduction. Since its inception twenty years, ago Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now Chapter I of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act) has provided school districts with financial support for compensatory education services for economically and educationally disadvantaged children and youth. However, critics of the program (hereafter referred to as Chapter I) abound (Doss and Holley, 1982; Cooley, 1981; Levin, 1977) and many educators at least agree that the program has not fulfilled, the perhaps unreasonable, expectations of its originators (Kaestle & Smith, 1982). Cooley (1981) called the effects of Chapter I "disappointingly small".

However, while Chapter I programs have been in operation for two decades, and have been regularly evaluated on local, state and national levels, we still know little about the nature of the instructional components of the program (Allington, forthcoming). Rarely, over the past twenty years has anyone systematically observed Chapter I students or instruction. We have the Quirk, et al (1975) study but those data were drawn from primarily whole-class programs in the late 1960's, before many of the current Chapter I regulations were developed. Dorr-Bremme (1982) observed in Chapter I schools but provides little description of instruction provided in either classrooms or remedial reading rooms. Carter (1984) notes briefly an observational study but provides little description of Chapter I instruction except to say "We had hoped to find some instructional programs that were particularly effective

with disadvantaged students, but we did not find them....even when students were theoretically receiving the same treatment, we found wide variation in the material they actually received" (p. 12). Beyond these studies there is little available in the published literature about what comprises remedial students' instructional programs in reading. We do have various large scale survey reports, most typically reporting data from program questionaires. We are not sure of the value of these data since the reliability and completeness seems questionable (Calfee and Drum, 1979; David, 1981). In any event, these surveys rarely provide much evidence on what constitutes remedial instruction.

In this study then, we sought to provide preliminary information on the nature of remedial reading instruction. We were particularly interested in examining the focus of remedial instruction and the relationships of this instruction to the classroom reading program. In addition, we gathered information on what instructional activities remedial students missed when they left their classroom.

The Method for Collecting the Data. We observed remedial reading students during both their classroom reading instruction and their remedial reading sessions. We selected volunteer classroom and remedial reading teachers in four schools in four school districts. These teachers taught in grades one to four. We observed students in five separate classrooms working with five different classroom and remedial reading teachers. Four of these five remedial programs were organized around a "pull-out" model wherein the students left the room for remediation. The fifth was an in-class remediation program in which instruction was delivered by a Chapter I aide in the mainstream classroom.

Our observational method relied heavily on observer field notes which

were keyed to clock times. In these field notes observers produced a constant written narrative describing the instruction they observed. These field notes were supplemented by audio tape recordings of some instructional sessions and xerox copies of curricular materials employed. In addition to our observational data we often interviewed teachers after our observations and all but one of the teachers participated in a substantial "debriefing" interview after the close of the school year.

The teachers. The five classroom teachers were experienced generally (7 - 20+ years of teaching) and experienced in teaching the grade level assigned during our observational year (3 - 10+ years of teaching at that grade level). All were permanently certified and had earned a bachelor's degree and completed some graduate work. The remedial reading teachers and aides all had at least a bachelor's degree and had completed some graduate work in reading. Four had New York State Reading Teacher certification. They tended to be less experienced generally (1 to 10 years in teaching) and had taught remedial reading for one to seven years.

The schools. The four schools enrolled from 100 to 450 students in the elementary grades. The districts ranged from rural, to rural-suburban, to small urban. All schools ran Chapter I and state funded Pupils with Special Educational Needs (PSEN) remedial programs. In New York State Chapter I and PSEN programs are coordinated such that Chapter I programs do not exist distinct from the PSEN program.

The students. We gathered observational data on 27 remedial reading students. Each of these students met the various criteria established by local, state and federal authorities for program eligibility and all were placed in the lowest reading achievement group in their classrooms. Some had

repeated one or more grades, or attended transition room programs and some had a consistent history of participation in Chapter I/PSEN programs. In short, the students all seemed less than advantaged economically and all lagged behind in their development of reading abilities.

Observational summary. We completed forty observations, with two observers present for 29 observation days (to record the classroom and remedial instruction). This resulted in a total of about 4400 minutes of observation, 3100 in classrooms and 1300 in remedial programs. We did not observe as many minutes of remedial instruction as originally planned for several reasons. In one case, for one-half the scheduled observations the remedial students did not leave the regular classroom for a variety of reasons. In another case, the remedial instruction was terminated about six weeks before the end of the school year so that "reports could be written". The remedial periods observed varied in length from 18 minutes twice weekly to 30 minutes daily.

Data reduction and reporting. As a first step all field notes were typed and tape recordings were transcribed and typed. Next we sketched time lines of the activity structure observed in both the classrooms and remedial settings. This time-line sketch resulted in a sort of map of what remedial students were doing during our observations. That is, we focused primarily on the types of instructional tasks they were (or were supposed to be) engaged in (e.g., small group round-robin oral reading, post-reading story discussion, independent seatwork on workbook pages, sight-word checkers, etc.). We used these time line sketches to "ball-park" (Schofield & Anderson, 1984) the proportion of time remedial students spent doing various types of tasks. We do not intend our data to be interpreted as precise accountings of what remedial students do all day for several reasons. First, we acknowledge the limitations of our

sample, it does not reflect all possible variations of Chapter I programs, students or teachers. Second, our remedial students varied widely on how they spent their days. We choose to try and "ball-park", that is describe generally what we observed as trends, and report anecdotally both supporting and contradictory instances. We hope to provide a flavor of what remedial students do in their school-based instruction but do not wish the responsibility of being held to producing a reliable and detailed description of the "average remedial student".

Findings

What is the instructional focus in remedial reading? Several beliefs guided our analysis of the field notes in obtaining information regarding instructional focus. First, we believe that greater time allocations in concert with increased time on tasks (Berliner, 1981; Carter, 1984) is a necessary component of instruction for poor readers. Yet, we also agree with Doyle (1983) that what a student learns is not merely a function of time on tasks but is also related to the kinds of tasks he/she is being asked to perform. In the end students learn what they practice. Completing ten worksheets on adding suffixes to words may produce a student who is proficient at adding suffixes but does not necessarily produce a reader who is better at independently using affixes to derive either correct pronunciation or meaning of an unfamiliar polysyllabic word encountered in text. We were influenced by the work of Leinhardt, Zigmond, and Cooley (1981) and Zigmond, Vallecorsa and Leinhardt (1980) who have found that the total amount of time spent in reading was not as important as how the time was used. They reported that the amount

of time spent reading connected text, particularly with the teacher in a direct instructional setting, contributed more to reading achievement than did a mere analysis of time on task and that little relationship was found between the amount of time spent in oral reading activities, reading games or workbook pages and growth.

It was for these reasons that we chose to examine our data for the focus of instruction by liberally adapting the categories of direct and indirect reading developed by Leinhardt and Seewald (1980). Direct reading activities are distinguished by "their proximity to the final goal of reading instruction, that is, reading print either silently or orally. Direct reading activities always involve students responding to print in the same direction as if they would if they were actually reading" (Leinhardt and Seewald, 1980). Indirect reading activities are described as "manipulating materials, writing, listening, or discussing without reading silently or orally". Likewise adopted were the level subclassification (letter, word, sentence, and paragraph) and modes (oral, silent, listen, and writes). We added a fifth level, however: paragraph or story with a comprehension focus.

Tasks. For each remedial reading teacher, each coding category was listed and time counts were tallied. These were then combined across the five teachers and proportions were computed. Figure 1 depicts the apportionment of time to reading tasks in remedial reading. Our observations suggest that roughly one third of the time is spent in direct reading activities, one third in indirect reading, and one third in management, waiting, out of room and other non-academic activities. However, it should be noted that two of the five remedial teachers contributed nearly three-quarters of the total time in direct reading activities. Thus the other three teachers engaged children in

substantially fewer direct reading activities.

Yet we must temper any initial enthusiasm over these gross proportions. When direct and indirect reading activities were examined for level of task (letter, word, sentence, and paragraph/story) we found a somewhat less optimistic picture. Sentence and word level activities accounted for the greatest amount of direct reading time, about two-thirds combined, followed, in decreasing order, by paragraphs and silent paragraph/story with comprehension focus about one-quarter and oral paragraphs with comprehension focus accounted for about 10 percent. Remember too, that three teachers spent substantially less time on these direct reading activities. If Zigmond, Vallecorsa and Leinhardt's (1980) finding, that time in teacher-directed silent reading activities accounts for most reading growth, is accepted as a general guideline, then less than 10 percent of the direct reading time, or about one hour of the 1300 minutes we observed, would be considered a highly effective remedial reading practice in terms of potential impact on achievement.

In the indirect reading category we found about half of the time was spent at the paragraph level with most of the remaining time focused on letter, words and sounds. Nevertheless, mindful that indirect reading indicates that a student is not directly involved with print but is, instead, talking about words, paragraphs, sounds, sentences and the like, we must question the value of the relatively high proportion of time spent in this area.

All other coding categories (management, waiting, other, and out of room) combined accounted for the other third of the time spent in remedial reading, about the same as spent in direct reading activities. Sometimes the

children did not arrive on schedule, sometimes the teacher was not prepared to begin a lesson when they arrived, sometimes students simply waited for papers to be checked or for a word to be pronounced or to have a worksheet explained. Management of student behavior accounted for the largest amount of time, however. In short, for a variety of reasons, one-third of the allocated time was not used for academic tasks.

If our analyses of time allocation is considered to be typical of many Chapter I remedial reading sessions, one could expect in a thirty minute session that roughly ten and a half minutes would be spent on direct reading activities, nine minutes on indirect reading activities and ten and a half minutes on non-reading activites. Relying on the school and teacher effectiveness literature (Anderson, Evertson and Brophy, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Duffy, 1981) and the recurring finding that effective teachers are first good managers, it would seem wise for reading teachers to take a careful look at classroom management and student transition patterns to see if this time could be reduced and reallocated to direct reading activities. In particular more time allocated to teacher directed reading of stories would seem most appropriate.

Materials. The remedial teachers rarely used basal reader materials and instead primarily employed a number of different "remedial" materials. These materials almost invariably had some single skill focus and relatively few offered selections longer than a paragraph to read. Little of the content seemed clearly related to concepts or topics central to the core curriculum. Much student time was spent on independent workbook or worksheet activities. Rarely did we observe instruction that provided a student with a strategy, for instance, for determining the main idea of a paragraph. Rather, we observed

students given "main idea" worksheets or workbooks where they were to select the correct response. The teacher became a monitor, correcting papers, rather than an instructor. Never did we observe a remedial teacher attempting to demonstrate the transferability of a skill from the worksheet to a classroom, or real-world, reading activity. The focus of the majority of instruction was the correct answer not the process or strategy one could use to derive a correct answer.

Much of the material used seemed to have been selected with little regard to sequencing, current classroom program, or prior learning. Rarely, for instance, did a remedial worksheet on syllabication match well with the students' classroom experiences with the same skill. Different syllabication patterns would be presented in a different format and, again, rarely did we observe any explicit attempt to relate the remedial work on syllabication to classroom work on the same skill. Just as infrequently were activities structured so that students' could deduce any direct link between their skill instruction and their actual reading experiences or needs.

Summary. We must caution that our data indicated wide variability between programs and wider variability from observation to observation than has been noted in classroom observational research. Hence, our observations lead us to agree with Carter (1984) that Chapter I might better be considered a funding program than an instructional intervention since there was no single Chapter I program. He also states that Chapter I teachers reported using a greater variety of methods and materials than did classroom teachers. These methods were not defined; nevertheless, we did not witness much instructional variety in individual teachers yet did observe a wide range of materials in use.

We know of no optimal number of methods and/or materials that remedial

reading teachers should possess, but we do feel that a reading teacher should construct a well-defined program designed to improve students' reading. This implies the use of clear goals and evidence of monitoring for advancement towards those. We saw little evidence of either. Because we did not observe teachers day after day, we cannot produce definitive statements about the sequencing of instruction. However, we are able to report that what we saw suggested a general "all-purpose" approach to remediation rather than an individualized one. That is, these teachers seemed to rely on a single or small set of activities for their several groups of students.

Also, conspicuous by its absence was any good evidence of monitoring student progress. Students read, completed worksheets, spelled words, worked on computers, and so on, but we did not witness any formative assessment activities nor did we observe any instances of record-keeping in relation to student performance. One group of students spent a portion of four remedial sessions (of six observed over a period of several months) working on a variety of worksheets on prefixes and suffixes with no record of performance. How much is enough and how will one know?

The school effectiveness literature indicates that more effective schools are characterized by clear goals and frequent monitoring of student progress (Edmonds, 1979). Those engaged in designing programs for remedial readers perhaps need to attend more carefully to these finding.

What is the relationship of remedial instruction to the classroom reading program? It has been argued that when classroom and remedial reading instruction lack congruence less than optimal achievement will be the result (Johnston, Allington and Afflerbach, 1985). We felt it worth exploring since

curricular congruence seems related to the concept of "cognitive confusion" (Vernon, 1958). The underlying thrust of this concept is that poor readers often do not possess a clear understanding of the nature and demands of the reading task. This lack of understanding, or confusion, might very well arise from a situation in which the curricula and instruction of the remedial program are quite different from those of the classroom reading program.

In our examination of the congruence between classroom and remedial reading curricula and instruction we developed the following set of questions: 1) Was the same or similar type of instructional material employed in both settings? 2) Was the same reading skill taught in both settings? 3) Was the same reading strategy taught in both settings?

Instructional material. Our analysis revealed that the same or similar instructional material was used in both settings infrequently, less than one of six lesson pairs. When the same materials were used, most of the time it involved using workbook/worksheet activities from the same commercial reading program. Worksheets were used as instructional materials in about two-thirds of the classroom observations and a third of the remedial reading sessions. Conversely, while in one one-third of the observations some classroom time was spent reading connected text, this activity was found in nearly half of the remedial sessions.

Skill. The same reading skill was the instructional focus for at least a portion of one-third of the lessons in the classroom and remedial settings. In only two paired observational sessions however, did the entire instructional sessions in both settings focus on the same reading skill, one paired session emphasizing directed oral reading, the other emphasizing directed silent reading. The other paired instructional sessions exhibiting

congruence for a portion of the time were most often congruent in an instructional segment emphasizing either oral or silent reading skills.

Strategy. In only two paired observational sessions was there congruence in the strategy being stressed in instruction. In both of these instances, phonics was being stressed in both instructional settings. In the first instance, classroom instruction involved worksheets focussing on the "two vowels together" rule for two vowel patterns. Students had to circle the words containing the appropriate sounds. In remedial instruction, students also worked on phonic based worksheets, however these worksheets focussed on different sounds represented by a different generalization. These students had to write the appropriate words under the proper column heading after reading them.

The second instance also involved vowel sounds as the instructional focus in both settings. In the classroom, students first engaged in an activity in which they had to indicate the vowel sound contained as the teacher held up a word card. They then sorted word cards according to vowel sounds and then completed a workbook page in which students underlined letters making the same vowel sounds within words. In the remedial setting, instruction focussed on a different letter-sound relationship found in a vowel-consonant cluster. Students and teacher pronounced 16 such words and then the teacher dictated sentences containing these words with the student writing the sentences as dictated. Any misspelled target words had to be correctly written five times.

It is evident that while the specific skills addressed in the two instructional settings in both of these instances were not congruent, the particular reading strategy addressed, namely phonic analysis of words, was

similar. The two instructional settings often failed to provide same type of instruction in terms of materials, skill, or strategy on the same day. Since our observations were not on a concentrated day after day basis, we lack a full perspective on whether the remedial instruction was either reinforcement of work which had previously been emphasized in the classroom or "pre-introduction" of work which would subsequently become the focus of classroom instruction. Our interview data gave some insight into this notion. All teachers stressed the need for communication between classroom and remedial teachers, but most indicated that more communication was needed in order to plan optimal instruction for target students in both settings. Often, teachers indicated a lack of clear understanding of the instructional focus in the other setting.

Based upon the results of these observations, one must conclude that there were relatively few instances of curricular congruence, regardless of how we define it. We found similar materials employed in both instructional settings in less than one-quarter of the observations, while the same strategy was emphasized in both instructional settings in less than one lesson in twenty. Our analysis also revealed that direct reading activities were more often emphasized in remedial lessons than classroom lessons, although less than half the remedial lessons contained such activities.

What classroom instruction do remedial students miss when they are receiving remedial instruction? We elected to examine this issue because the current literature is quite confusing in addressing the question. Since Chapter I regulations mandate that remedial services "supplement not supplant" core curriculum instruction several of the large scale evaluation projects have attempted to address the issue of "what is missed". These projects studied

whether Chapter I students receive the same amount of core curriculum instruction as non-Chapter I students, one aspect of the "supplement not supplant" provision. It has been generally reported that Chapter I instruction tends to replace core curriculum instruction. Archambault and St. Pierre (1980), for instance, report that in seven of the twelve districts they examined Chapter I students were not receiving core curriculum instruction in reading/language arts in amounts comparable to that offered non-Chapter I students. Likewise, Lignon and Doss (1982) report, "the quantity of instruction received by a Title I (Chapter I) student is not greater that the quantity received by a non-Title I (Chapter I) student..." (p. 3). Kimbrough and Hill (1981) report the same findings.

While there seems to be a general consensus that many Chapter I programs add little reading instructional time to the poor readers school day, we actually know very little about what these students do miss while they receive their remedial instruction. In addition, we were intrigued by the data in an NIE report (1977) which indicated that one-third of the Chapter I students miss "no subject" as opposed to the 15-20% reported to miss Science, Social Studies or Reading/Language Arts. It was difficult for us to imagine students leaving the room and missing nothing.

To accumulate evidence on what students' miss in the classroom instructional program while they receive remedial instruction we left one observer in the regular classroom while another followed the student to the remedial setting. The observer in the regular classroom systematically recorded the classroom activities that the remaining students engaged in while other students received Chapter I instruction. In two-thirds of the cases the Chapter I students went to remedial instruction while the classroom teacher

conducted other reading groups and monitored student independent seatwork. The Chapter I students always met for group instruction in the classroom, typically before their remedial session. Thus, what they missed most often was time to complete seatwork activities not, generally, group or individual teacher directed instruction. About a quarter of the time, however, remedial students missed teacher-directed reading of connected text or teacher-directed practice activities.

From our observations it seems that some of the previous results are more interpretable. If students go to remedial reading during their classroom seatwork time then no additional quantity of instruction is offered. That is, no additional time to engage in learning activities related to reading development are made available. However, the possibility exists that a higher-quality instruction is offered in the remedial class - particularly if one compares the remedial instruction to classroom seatwork. Our remedial students varied widely in their seatwork behavior. In nearly half of the observation days a quarter or more of the remedial students were more likely to be off-task than purposefully engaged in academic work during available classroom seatwork time. However, wide variation existed among students as illustrated by the following anecdote.

One remedial student, Joe, had great difficulty in monitoring his independent work behaviors. Over a period of nearly 90 minutes of classroom seatwork time Joe was coded as on-task for only 23 minutes, with one seven minute period of this on-task the result of direct teacher monitoring at his desk. During an extended 55 minute seatwork period when he was to be completing math and language arts assignments Joe was on-task for only eight short periods ranging from 1 to 4 minutes in length. He managed to complete

15 math problems during this 13 minutes (of 55) of on-task behavior. Interestingly, Joe was never coded as off-task during his small group remedial period (n=3) or small group (n=4) classroom reading group lesson. These sessions were 25 and 30 minutes long respectively. During remedial sessions Joe sat next to the reading teacher and got much of her attention but did keep working along.

Another remedial student, Jim, was never coded as off-task during the 90 minutes and managed to complete all assigned seatwork and remedial assignments plus an additional remedial worksheet compared to Joe's accomplishment. Jim seemed quite successful in completing his seatwork, not only did he complete it, he managed to complete it quite accurately. Joe on the other hand, neither completed his work nor was he particularly successful with the small amount of work done. Joe seemed to need immediate verification of responses in order to continue working and he was not pron o attempt independent problem solving. Rather, he requested assistance or working when assistance wasn't readily available.

Summary. Our data support most previous research in indicating that participating in Chapter I normally does not provide students with additional time for reading instruction (Allington, 1980; Archambault and St. Pierre, 1980). In fact, like Lignon and Doss (1982), our data suggest that often the travel time to Chapter I sites, the social greeting time and so on, eat away at instructional time such that Chapter I students may actually have less time available for instructional activities. We had thought it possible that participating in Chapter I programs might, however, substantially enhance the quality of instruction even if quantity of instruction was decreased. What remedial students most often miss when they leave is independent seatwork

time. If they received increased amounts of direct reading activities perhaps the potential costs, in terms of time lost, could be effectively countered. Unfortunately, remedial students did not seem to receive substantial amounts of either direct instruction or teacher directed reading of connected text. When considering effects on individual students it seems that some, like Joe, may benefit since little academic work occurred during classroom seatwork time in contrast to greater on-task efforts in the remedial setting. For other students, like Jim, the amount of academic work he accomplished varied little by location. The time lost, in his case, through Chapter I participation may not have a positive impact on his reading accomplishment.

How effective does remedial instruction seem? We examine the issue of the potential effectiveness of the remedial instruction from a theoretical rather than an empirical stance. We did not, for a variety of good reasons, attempt to identify the achievement outcomes of the classroom and remedial instruction we observed. Instead, we offer an evaluation of the instruction from a general model of instructional effects based on both theory and other empirical studies of reading instruction and its effects (Berliner, 1980; Leinhardt, Cooley and Zigmond, 1981; Keisling, 1978; Anderson, Evertson and Brophy, 1979).

The importance of "time-to-learn" is well documented. Less well-known, however, is the conceptualization of reading difficulties as a "time-to-learn" problem which suggests that poor readers simply need additional instructional and learning time (Johnston, Allington and Afflerbach, 1985). If reading difficulties are best described as a "time-to-learn" problem, then it seems, based on our observations and others, unlikely, that most remedial instruction will substantially effect achievement

since little additional instructional or learning time is made available.

As research has continued to explore instructional efforts a few instructional activities are consistently reported to produce positive effects on achievement. A quite general aspect of instructional environments that is correlated with achievement is "time-on-task". We found wide differences among the students we observed but, in general, found little evidence that remedial instruction necessarily increased on-task behavior. In fact, if we consider travel time and social set up times for remedial instruction as "off-task" times then remedial students generally gain no substantial increases in on-task time. We assume, based primarily on the work of Leinhardt, Zigmond and Cooley (1981), that the amount of teacher directed reading of connected text with a comprehension emphasis was the single best predictor of improved reading. Thus, we attempted to identify what proportion of classroom and remedial instruction involved the students in teacher directed reading of connected text. We have no benchmark against which to judge our findings that about 10 percent of the remedial instruction involved such reading activities. However, if direct reading activities are as important as earlier studies suggest then remedial instruction would be more effective if greater proportions of time were allocated to teacher directed reading of connected text with a comprehension emphasis (Zigmond, Vallecorsa and Leinhardt, 1980).

Finally, we have only theory and common sense to guide us on the issue of curricular congruence and the potential effects it might exert on achievement. Nonetheless, we accept the proposition that remedial instruction is most effective when it supports and extends learning in the core classroom curriculum. We are unclear how best to measure congruence, but found a

distinct lack of congruent instruction regardless of how we attempted to define it. Thus it seems that the instruction we observed was less effective than it might have been had their been more coordination and, hence, greater congruence in the instruction offered in the two settings.

Summary. We observed many good instructional sessions in both classrooms and remedial rooms. We saw substantial progress in some children and no observable progress in others. We saw no student whose problems were solved in the sense that they were returned to the regular classroom with no further need of remedial services. The problems we perceived were often "organizational" problems more than ineffectiveness on the part of individual teachers. It seems that the remedial instruction we observed could be improved, some lessons substantially. However, often the improvement will necessarily stem from complete program redesign not just greater effort by individual teachers.

Conclusion.

Even though Chapter I remedial reading programs have been in operation for two decades, we still know little about the remedial instruction offered. While the debate continues about the effectiveness of this program, and remedial efforts in general (Cooley, 1981; Stickney and Plunkett, 1983), we do seem to have agreement that little is actually known about what types of programs or instructional interventions are most effective (Carter, 1984). We see these deficiencies as truly disappointing.

The data gathered in our study provide a preliminary view of the nature of remedial reading. However, remedial programs vary widely, and while

we feel we captured much of this variation, there are obviously programs structured and delivered differently from those we observed. Each of the programs we observed were offering needed and useful services but, importantly, all could have been improved. Our observational data suggest some reasons why remedial programs may not be as effective as some supporters assume.

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